

To: Government Administration and Elections Committee, Connecticut General Assembly

From: Margo Maine, PhD, FAED, CEDS, Maine & Weinstein Specialty Group, LLC, 433 South Main St, Suite 327, West Hartford, Connecticut 06110

Re: SB 438, An Act Designating Various Months, Weeks, and Days of Commemoration

March 14, 2016

I am a clinical psychologist and expert in eating disorders, having practiced in CT for over 30 years. During this time, eating disorders have only increased, affecting all ages, from young children to the elderly, both male and female and every ethnicity, race and socio-economic class. They do not discriminate and have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses- greater than depression, schizophrenia, or alcoholism.

In Connecticut, 3.4% of the population has an eating disorder, with females twice as likely to be afflicted than males. Eating disorders are among the most frequent psychiatric conditions in adolescents and young adults, with rates of 7-21% in primary care medical settings. Sixteen percent of ER patients aged 14-20 screened positive for eating disorders, regardless of race, income, and gender, with considerable comorbidity with depression and substance abuse. Adults are also seriously affected with 13% of women over the age of 50 reporting current symptoms- more than the number affected by breast cancer.

These are serious but treatable illnesses that require improved prevention, education, outreach, training of medical providers, access to treatment, and research. Awareness weeks are effective and life-saving efforts, as public education is the key to diagnosis and treatment.

Each year, the National Eating Disorders Association designates the last week of February as its official awareness week and local and national programs take place across the country. In the past I have worked with the governor's staff to have the week recognized in CT. Last month, Governor Dannel Malloy issued an official statement proclaiming February 21-27, 2016.

Please support this bill which includes the annual designation of National Eating Disorders Association Week. in our great state.